

At a congressional briefing yesterday, Administration officials revealed that the data that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has withheld from this year's *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report shows a "dramatic up-tick" in terrorist attacks in 2004. The data presented by State Department and National Counterterrorism Center officials showed that there were approximately 650 significant terrorist attacks throughout the world in 2004, more than triple the 175 attacks reported in 2003, the previous 20-year high.

The data revealed approximately 198 significant attacks in Iraq alone in 2004 – nine times the number identified in the previous year. Even this increase may be an underestimate of actual attacks. Many incidents in Iraq that most Americans would regard as terrorism, such as those directed at U.S. armed forces or resulting in only Iraqi fatalities, do not meet the Department's definition of "international" attacks and were not included.

The officials identified greater global awareness of terrorism as one factor in the rise of counted incidents, emphasizing enhanced efforts to monitor attacks related to the conflict in Kashmir. Yet even if every incident in India and Pakistan is removed from the database, the number of remaining attacks is still twice the total number in 2003. The rise in terrorist attacks in 2004 was by no means isolated to Kashmir and Iraq, with the number of incidents in Afghanistan and in Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank having doubled in the past year.

According to the officials conducting the briefing, the 2004 information is the most comprehensive and reviewed data on terrorist attacks ever compiled. The data, the officials stated, was prepared and vetted according to methodology and definitions specified in the statute governing the *Patterns of Global Terrorism* report specifically for inclusion in this year's report.

Last year, Administration officials cited the annual report as an illustration of the great progress that has been made in fighting terrorism. The discovery that these statements were erroneous and that terrorist attacks were in fact at record levels in 2003 was made only because the State Department under Secretary Colin Powell released the data underlying the report.

Rep. Waxman has called on Secretary Rice to follow the example of her predecessor and release the data. While acknowledging that the large increase in terrorist attacks in 2004 may undermine claims of success in the war on terror, Rep. Waxman writes Secretary Rice that

“political inconvenience has never been a legitimate basis for withholding facts from the American people.”

### **Documents and Links**

- [Letter to Secretary Rice](#)